

VZCZCXRO8864  
OO RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHSW #0104/01 0581617  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 271617Z FEB 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BERN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4888  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0181  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0317

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERN 000104

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR (A/S FRIED, DAS DICARLO), EUR/SCE (J.BLACK),  
AND EUR/AGS (Y.SAINT-ANDRE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [EU](#) [KV](#) [SZ](#)  
SUBJECT: SWITZERLAND RECOGNIZES KOSOVO'S INDEPENDENCE

REF: A. BERN 68

[1](#)B. BERN 81  
[1](#)C. STATE 12026

Classified By: Ambassador Peter R. Coneway; reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) At 4:00 p.m. (CET) on February 27, Swiss President Pascal Couchepin announced that the Swiss Federal Council (cabinet) had decided in a meeting earlier in the day to recognize the independence of Kosovo and to "establish diplomatic and consular relations between the two countries." (full text of President Couchepin's statement is provided in para 3) The Federal Council's decision followed GOS consultations with the Swiss parliamentary foreign affairs committees, February 21-22 (reftel B), and constitutes the final step for formal Swiss recognition of Kosovo.

[1](#)2. (C) Following the February 27 Federal Council meeting, and prior to President Couchepin's public announcement, MFA State Secretary Michael Ambuehl informed Ambassador Coneway of the

SIPDIS

Federal Council's positive decision, and said that the GOS was delaying the public announcement for several hours to permit Switzerland to provide notification in diplomatic channels to Serbia and to Kosovo. MFA contacts inform post that Ambassador Christian Meuwly, Head of the MFA's European Affairs Division, and Jean-Daniel Ruch, Deputy Head of the MFA's Human Security Division, will attend the first meeting of the International Steering Group on February 28 in Vienna (reftel C).

[1](#)3. (U) BEGIN TEXT OF STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT COUCHEPIN:

Today, on the recommendation of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and following consultations with the Foreign Affairs Committees of the Council of States and the National Council, the Federal Council decided to recognize Kosovo and to establish diplomatic and consular relations between the two countries.

The Federal Council took note of the Declaration of Independence adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo on 17 February 2008 and the formal invitation to recognize Kosovo that was addressed to the Swiss government by the President and the Prime Minister of Kosovo on the same day.

In particular, the Federal Council welcomed the clear commitment expressed by the authorities of Kosovo in the two above-mentioned documents to respect in full the obligations

set out in the Comprehensive Proposal for Kosovo Status Settlement of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Kosovo, Marti Ahtisaari, especially those concerning the protection of minorities and the supervision of Kosovo's independence by means of an international civilian and military presence.

The Federal Council also noted that the authorities of Kosovo intend to cooperate with the NATO military presence, KFOR, on the basis resolution 1244/1999 of the United Nations Security Council.

In a situation such as this, where emotions run very high and there is a conflict of interests, an ideal solution is not possible. Nevertheless the Federal Council considers that this new step in the political reconstitution of the region to be preferable to any alternative. In addition, it considers that in view of the circumstances of this particular case, Switzerland's recognition of the independence of Kosovo does not constitute a precedent.

Clarification of the status of Kosovo is a precondition for the stability as well as for the economic and political development of the whole of the Western Balkans. The Federal Council declares its intention to pursue Switzerland's commitment in the region and to take an active part in the international efforts both in Kosovo and in the region as a whole.

Switzerland has always adopted balanced positions on issues concerning the Balkans, taking into account the legitimate interests of all parties involved. The Federal Council wished to emphasize that Switzerland's recognition of Kosovo goes hand in hand with its desire to develop further its good relations with Serbia and to strengthen the very close cooperation that exists between Serbia and Switzerland.

BERN 00000104 002 OF 002

END TEXT OF STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT COUCHEPIN  
CONEWAY